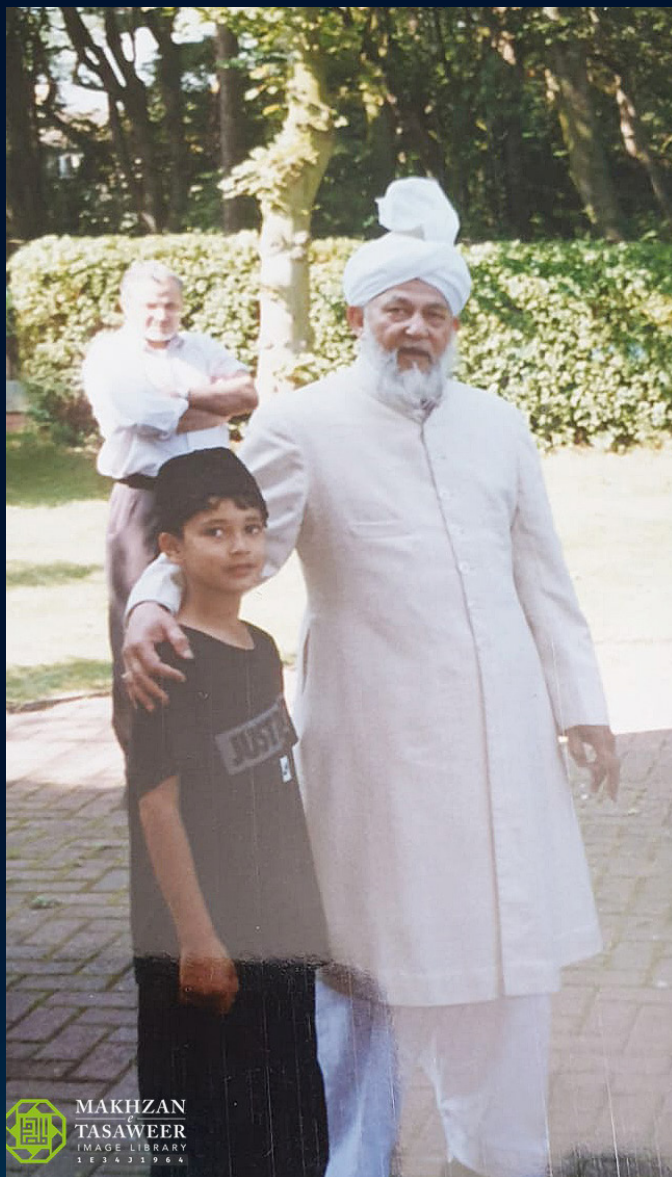
ISMAEL

Taleem & Tarbiyat Magazine for Waqfeen-e-Nau

QUARTERLY | ISSUE #23 | JUL-SEP 2021

الله جل جلاله

I love my Caliph, but he'll never know

Written by: Syed Taalay Ahmad Shaheed

I love my Caliph more than the others
They only love, i'm only his lover
They crawl to his hand from far icy coasts
A wonderful host, supported by hosts
as mountains migrate for prophets and kings
When heaven comes near they see him and sing
My silence might grate but I love him more
Whole with holiness as my soothed soul soars
When they see his face they weep and cry
My heart beats to tears but my eyes are dry
But by God's promise I'm able to boast
I swear I can prove I love him the most
They truthfully tell, disclosing their love
Humble, he blushes, embarrassed enough
For his weary ears, surely prefer
Durood and Takbirs, Allahu Akbar!
So their cue of lovers ends at this line
I keep my secret for his sake not mine
The lamp in my night, forever aglow
I love my Caliph, but he'll never know

FROM THE EDITOR

It is important to know God's purpose in making the creation because human beings can fulfil their own purpose only when they know clearly why God made them. Every being comes into existence to fulfil a purpose given to it by its creator; nothing creates itself or determines its own purpose. As a result, a creation can fulfil its potential only by realising its creator-given purpose.

Though different people, on account of their short-sightedness or lack of courage, appoint various types of objectives for their lives and stop short at worldly purposes and desires, yet the purpose that God Almighty has specified in His Holy Word is:

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ

"I have created the Jinn and the men so that they should worship Me"

The Holy Qur'an (51: 57)

According to this verse the true purpose of human life is the worship and understanding of God Almighty and devotion to Him. It is obvious that it is not open to man that he should himself appoint the purpose of his life by his own authority in as much as man does not arrive in the world of his own will, nor will he depart from this world of his own will. He is a created being and He who created him and gave better and higher abilities than those given other animates, has appointed a purpose for his life. Whether anyone realises that purpose or not, without doubt the purpose of man's creation is the worship and understanding of God Almighty and to lose himself in Him.

The Promised Messiah (As) stating about Faculties for seeing God can be developed in this very world mentions that: "The Holy Quran teaches us that salvation is a matter that is manifested in this very life as He has said:

He who is blind in this world will be blind in the here after also. (17:73)

This means that a person takes with him from this world the faculties for seeing God and the means of eternal salvation. He has repeatedly indicated that the means of man's attaining salvation is eternal as God Himself is eternal. It is not that after a time He recalled that if men cannot attain salvation by any other means, He should bestow salvation on them by killing Himself. A person can be described as having attained salvation when all his passions are consumed and God's will becomes his will and he becomes so devoted to God out of love that nothing remains his and everything becomes God's. All his words and deeds and movements and designs should be for God and he should perceive in his heart that all his delights are now in God and that a moment's separation from God means death for him.

In this issue we focus on this very topic and see how on can attain nearness to Allah the Almighty.

CONTACT

WAQF-E-NAU (CENTRAL)
22 DEER PARK ROAD,
LONDON. SW19 3TL (UK)

+44 (0)20 8544 7633
+44 (0)20 8544 7643

manager@ismaelmagazine.org
editorenglish@ismaelmagazine.org
editorurdu@ismaelmagazine.org

www.waqfenauintl.org

Follow the Central Waqf-e-Nau Department on

@WAQFENAUINTL

@WAQFENAUINTL

@WAQFENAUINTL

WELCOME TO

ISMAEL MAGAZINE

QUARTERLY | ISSUE # 23 | JUL-SEP 2021

CONTENTS

04 Holy Quran

05 Hadith

06 Sayings of Promised Messiah (as)

07 Excerpt from the Friday Sermon

12 Introduction to the book: Our God

15 Proving The Existance Of God

16 The First Jalsa Salana Uk

24 Travelling the world during the Pandemic
Abid Khan Sahib's Diary

29 How Islam Transformed England

34 Wordsearch

12 OUR GOD

The Holy Quran

بِسۡمِ اللّٰہِ الرَّحۡمٰنِ الرَّحِیۡمِ

هُوَ اللّٰهُ الۡخَالِقُ الۡبَارِئُ الۡمُصَوِّرُ لَهُ الۡاَسۡمَآءُ الۡحُسۡنٰی ؕ
یُسَبِّحُ لَهٗ مَا فِی السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ الۡاَرۡضِ ۚ وَ هُوَ الۡعَزِیۡزُ الۡحَکِیۡمُ

He is Allah, the Creator, the Maker, the Fashioner. His are the most beautiful names. All that is in the heavens and the earth glorifies Him, and He is the Mighty, the Wise.

(Chapter 25, Verse 59)

Sayings of the Holy Prophet (saw)

اَللّٰهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلٰى مُحَمَّدٍ وَّعَلٰى اٰلِ مُحَمَّدٍ كَمَا صَلَّيْتَ عَلٰى اِبْرَاهِيْمَ وَعَلٰى اٰلِ اِبْرَاهِيْمَ اِنَّكَ حَمِيْدٌ مَّجِيْد
اَللّٰهُمَّ بَارِكْ عَلٰى مُحَمَّدٍ وَّعَلٰى اٰلِ مُحَمَّدٍ كَمَا بَارَكْتَ عَلٰى اِبْرَاهِيْمَ وَعَلٰى اٰلِ اِبْرَاهِيْمَ اِنَّكَ حَمِيْدٌ مَّجِيْد

عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ قَالَ لَمَّا كَثُرَ النَّاسُ قَالَ ـ ذَكَرُوا ـ أَنْ يَعْلَمُوا
وَقْتَ الصَّلاَةِ بِشَىْءٍ يَعْرِفُونَهُ، فَذَكَرُوا أَنْ يُورُوا نَارًا أَوْ يَضْرِبُوا
نَاقُوسًا، فَأُمِرَ بِلاَلٌ أَنْ يَشْفَعَ الأَذَانَ وَأَنْ يُوتِرَ الإِقَامَةَ

Anas bin Malik narrates, when the number of Muslims increased they discussed the question as to how to know the time for the prayer by some familiar means. Some suggested that a fire be lit (at the time of the prayer) and others put forward the proposal to ring the bell. Bilal was ordered to pronounce the wording of Adhan twice and of the Iqama once only.

Sahih al Bukhari, Chapter: Call to Prayer (Adhaan)

The Unity of Allah

The Unity of God is a light which illumines the heart only after the negation of all deities, whether they belong to the inner world or the outer world. It permeates every particle of man's being. How can this be acquired without the aid of God and His Messenger? The duty of man is only to bring death upon his ego and turn his back to devilish pride. He should not boast of his having been reared in the cradle of knowledge but should consider himself as if he were merely an ignorant person, and occupy himself in supplications. Then the light of Unity will descend upon him from God and will bestow new life upon Him.

(Ruhani Khazain Vol. 22 Haqiqatul-Wahi, p 148)

'Syed Taalay Ahmad An Exemplary Life-Devotee'

After reciting Tashahhud, Ta'awwuz and Surah al-Fatihah, His Holiness, Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad (aba) said that recently, a very dear life-devotee, Syed Taalay Ahmad was martyred in Ghana, Africa.

His Holiness (aba) said that on the night between the 23rd and 24th of August, the MTA team which was filming a documentary was travelling when they were attacked by robbers who fired at them, injuring two people, Umar Farooq and Syed Taalay Ahmad. On the way to the hospital, Syed Taalay Ahmad passed away. His Holiness (aba) said that although there may have been previous martyrdoms of workers in MTA International from other parts of the world, but this was the first from the UK. His Holiness (aba) also said that perhaps, this was the first martyrdom from Waqfe Nau UK. His Holiness (aba) also requested prayers for Umar Farooq who was injured during the incident and is still recovering.

His Holiness (aba) said that he was the great grandson of Hazrat Mirza Bashir Ahmad (ra) and Mir Muhammad Ismail (ra). In this way, he was related to both the Promised Messiah (as) as well as his wife Hazrat Nusrat Jahan Begum Sahiba. He was also the son-in-law of Ghulam Qadir Shaheed.

Syed Taalay Ahmad's Services to the Ahmadiyya Community

His Holiness (aba) said that Syed Taalay Ahmad had been active in serving the Ahmadiyya Muslim Youth Association UK in various capacities, both in Majlis Atfalul Ahmadiyya and Majlis Khuddamul Ahmadiyya. He also served the Community in his local chapter of Hartlepool, UK. He was appointed to the MTA News team full-time in 2016, before which he served The Review of Religions as head of the indexing and tagging department. He had the opportunity of making various documentaries for MTA. He was

also the one to initiate the very popular This Week With Huzoor programme which features on MTA.

Incident Leading to His Martyrdom

His Holiness (aba) said that Syed Taalay Ahmad was very passionate about his work and seeing it through, no matter the hardships he may have to face along the way. His main focus was always to ensure that the work was carried out. This was evident from the incident of his martyrdom, as he began his journey at a time when there was increased danger. His Holiness (aba) said that as Syed Taalay Ahmad was setting out for his journey, he was worried about the video files that he had recorded and wanted to ensure that the files would not be corrupted, thus he began working on his laptop while on the journey.

His Holiness (aba) detailed the incidents leading up to the martyrdom of Syed Taalay Ahmad. Robbers had begun firing at the vehicle after which they approached the vehicle and took whatever valuables they had. Syed Taalay Ahmad had been struck in the back and lost a great deal of blood. As the robbery was happening, he quickly hid the laptop and other equipment under the seats so that the robbers would not be able to find it. As they were driving to a nearby clinic, Syed Taalay Ahmad would ask whether His Holiness (aba) had been informed about this incident. From the clinic, it was decided that he would need to be taken to a hospital. Along the way, he said, 'Tell Huzoor that I love him and tell my family that I love them.'

A Diamond Which Has Departed Us

His Holiness (aba) said that this was a beautiful diamond which has left us. This loss has shaken everyone. He understood his oath of life-devotion and fulfilled it to the utmost degree. His Holiness (aba) said that Syed Taalay Ahmad always surprised him, and he would wonder how a youngster who had been raised amidst a worldly environment was able to understand and fulfil his pledge of devotion. His level of love and devotion for Khilafat was such that even some who have deep-rooted knowledge of faith do not possess it. His devotion to Khilafat was such that even in his last moments, he was constantly expressing his love for Khilafat.

His Holiness (aba) said that a few years ago, Syed Taalay Ahmad wrote a poem in which he

expressed his love for Khilafat. He started the poem by saying that he loved His Holiness (aba) the most, and he ended by saying that perhaps His Holiness (aba) would never know how much he loved him. His Holiness (aba) said that even before Syed Taalay Ahmad's last words, he knew – he knew how much Syed Taalay Ahmad loved him when he was filming with his camera, and even when he met him without his camera. He could tell from the sparkle in his eyes and the light on his face, indeed from his every action, His Holiness (aba) was aware of the love that Syed Taalay Ahmad had for him.

His Abounding Love for Khilafat

His Holiness (aba) said that from among the youth of the Promised Messiah's (as) family, there was no one who loved Khilafat as much as Syed Taalay Ahmad, in fact there are few elders even who love Khilafat as much as him. He would try to hide his love, but in one way or another, Allah Almighty would make that love manifest. He would be concerned with how he could inform the world about Khilafat, and how he could best serve, even to the point of having to sacrifice his life.

His Holiness (aba) said that at the time of the burial of the Fourth Caliph (rh), as he was standing by the grave before the burial commenced, a young Syed Taalay Ahmad came and stood beside him. At the time, His Holiness (aba) did not know who he was, but now seeing the picture, he realises that even at that time, it was as if he was pledging to always be of service to Khilafat.

Extraordinary Obedience to the Khalifa of the Time

His Holiness (aba) said that he himself bears testament to the fact that Syed Taalay Ahmad fulfilled his oath of life-devotion. His Holiness (aba) said that once in a meeting, he told missionaries to offer Tahajjud (pre-dawn voluntary prayers) for at least one hour a day. Even though he was not a missionary, Syed Taalay Ahmad knew he was a life-devotee, and so he too did his best to implement this instruction. At times he would appear tired during the day, as he had woken up early to try and fulfil this instruction of His Holiness (aba) which was not even directly addressed to him. Yet, this was the level to which he fulfilled his oath of life-devotion.

His Holiness (aba) addressed members of the Promised Messiah's (as) family to learn from the example of Syed Taalay Ahmad, and increase in their devotion. There is no honour in being from the progeny of a revered person, unless one's own actions are worthy of honour.

Testimony of Syed Taalay Ahmad's Excellent Qualities

HIs Holiness (aba) said that many people have been writing to him about his excellent qualities, which shed even more light on his level of devotion. His Holiness (aba) said that it was only right for him to share some of the sentiments which he has received.

His Holiness (aba) shared the sentiments of Amer Safir, the Editor for The Review of Religions, who said that Syed Taalay Ahmad was head of the indexing and tagging team which worked to organise almost a -100year's worth of material from The Review of Religions, which was a great task. Everything that he did revolved around Khilafat. If ever he heard some instruction from His Holiness (aba) for him, his eyes would light up like a child seeing candy. His standard of work was amazing, as there were times when he would be working on two documentaries at the same time.

His Holiness (aba) stated that Abdul Quddoos Arif, Sadr Khuddamul Ahmadiyya UK, said that a young age Taalay Ahmad had been reading the Five-Volume Commentary of the Holy Qur'an in great detail, leaving notes and highlights

throughout, and he completed the entire commentary within a few days. He said that whenever he would praise Taalay Ahmad for any documentary he worked on, his response would always be to ask for prayers, and that it was all due to the grace of Allah Almighty.
His Holiness (aba) said that once someone raised an objection on social media to the title of one of his documentaries, to which he responded. He said that he only defended the title because it had been approved by His Holiness (aba). Had the title been from himself or anyone else, he would have remained silent.
His Holiness (aba) shared the sentiments of his wife Satwat Sahiba, who said that Syed Taalay was very kind, caring and loving. He was always very appreciative and supportive, even when she would be worried due to the martyrdom of her own father. She noticed his love for the Promised Messiah (as) very early on in their relationship. He would relate stories about the Holy Prophet (sa) to his son, and would himself weep. Whenever they had a family meeting with His Holiness (aba), he would treat his son for behaving well. His Holiness (aba) said that even seemingly small things indicate the level of a person's sincerity and devotion. If ever he even sensed that His Holiness (aba) was not pleased with him (His Holiness (aba) commented that he did not recall any instance when that would have been the case) then he would pray profusely in Tahajjud. Whenever he received any gift he would always be grateful. He always trusted in Allah to always fulfil his needs, and in fact, on various occasions, in one way or another, his needs would be fulfilled and God would provide for him in some way. He was very kind, forgiving, and never held any enmity towards anyone.
His Holiness (aba) shared the sentiments of Syed Taalay Ahmad's father Syed Hashim Akbar. He said that he had seen a dream about his own martyrdom and later learned that his son Syed Taalay Ahmad had seen the same dream about the martyrdom of his father. However he must have prayed that he should be martyred instead of his father. Seeing his excellent qualities, God Almihgty accepted his prayer and bestowed upon him the rank of martyrdom. His soul was devoted to the Holy Prophet (sa), and he lived and breathed for the sake of Khilafat. Syed Taalay Ahmad's mother Amatul Shakoor said that he was inclined towards religion from a young age. He was very good at his studies and would obtain good grades.

His Holiness (aba) related that Syed Taalay Ahmad's sister Nudrat Sahiba said that he would often return home late from his work. He would often watch various programmes and documentaries in order to improve his own documentary-making skills. He often studied Ahadith (sayings of the Holy Prophet (sa)) and became quite well-versed. He would often be able to quote Qur'anic verses on a given matter, and he had also studied Arabic and learned Arabic grammar. Nudrat Sahiba also shared two dreams which seem to have been indicative of his martyrdom.
His Holiness (aba) shared the sentiments of Syed Taalay Ahmad's youngest sister who said that he was an excellent role model and she was able to learn a great deal from him. He told her that on the way to and from work, he would listen to lessons on the Holy Qur'an given by the Fourth Caliph (rh). He taught her that even whilst joking, one should not make fun of any religion.
His Holiness (aba) shared the sentiments of Abid Khan, Press Secretary of the Ahmadiyya Community who was also Syed Taalay Ahmad's maternal uncle. He said that Syed Taalay Ahmad possessed a profound love for the Promised

Messiah (as), Though he was extremely proud to be from the progeny of the Promised Messiah (as), he never openly shared this fact nor did he ever use it to receive any sort of favourable treatment. Before departing for his trip to Africa which had been according to the instructions of His Holiness (aba), he made a detailed schedule of his daily work. He said that if ever he learned that the instruction of His Holiness (aba) was even slightly different from his own opinion, he would accept it wholeheartedly. He said that Syed Taalay Ahmad made it his mission to make MTA News a strong department within MTA, and through determination and hard work, he was able to achieve this.

His Holiness (aba) said that one aspect which Adam Walker noticed in Syed Taalay Ahmad was that he worked very meticulously and would always think of new ways to convey the message of the Promised Messiah (as). He said that he was always truthful and straightforward in everything he said.

His Holiness (aba) then said that Naseem Bajwa mentioned that whilst he was the missionary in Bradford, he noticed the young Syed Taalay Ahmad to always be obedient, respectful to his elders, responsible, always be busy in the remembrance of God, and passionate about preaching the message of Islam Ahmadiyyat.

His Holiness (aba) then presented the sentiments of Nosherwan Rasheed, a missionary and colleague of Taalay Ahmad. He said that over the last three years, Syed Taalay Ahmad was like a brother to him, he was regular in offering prayers, fasting and giving alms.

His Holiness (aba) said that Syed Taalay Ahmad fulfilled his due in being the spiritual and physical progeny of the Holy Prophet (sa) as well as the Promised Messiah (as). His Holiness (aba) said

that thus, it is fitting that Allah Almighty chose the (Islamic) month of Muharram for Syed Taalay Ahmad to be able to present this sacrifice.

His Holiness (aba) prayed that may Allah Almighty continue to elevate the station of Syed Taalay Ahmad. Surely, he would have been given a place in Paradise near the Holy Prophet (sa). In fact, someone saw a dream that he was running towards the Holy Prophet (sa) who was welcoming him. His Holiness (aba) also prayed that his family may be able to bear this loss with patience. His Holiness (aba) said that after the Friday prayer, he would lead the funeral prayer of Syed Taalay Ahmad.

Summary prepared by The Review of Religions.
(Friday Sermon delivered on 3rd September, 2021)

OUR GOD

Written by | Hazrat Mirza Bashir Ahmad, M.A(ra)

If there is a God, Why Can We Not See Him?

I would first like to remove one misconception which commonly besets people with regard to the existence of God. If there is a God, why are we not able to see Him? This is hardly a new question, and we have heard it from time immemorial. The Holy Quran tells us that the same question was put to the Holy Prophet saw by the nonbelievers of Arabia. Whenever I hear people raising this question, I feel sorry for them. It is such a pity that when man stumbles and his reason becomes blunted by the veils of indifference, he starts denying even self-evident truths. When this objection was raised in the past—however absurd and baseless it was—it had the potential to deceive some ignorant people. But what surprises me is that this objection should be raised in the present age! I am truly astonished at the intellect of people who use such objections to justify their denial of God. But as it is a common objection, I will proceed to answer it, albeit briefly.

There are different ways of learning about things. For instance, we learn by sight, sound, taste, smell, texture, or movement. All information we derive from the various senses, have the same degree of authenticity and credibility. We cannot demand that we must learn about something through a particular sense, or else we shall deny its very existence. The eyes, for example, are the medium for perceiving different colours; the nose is used for discerning different smells; and, the ears are for hearing sounds. Would it not be sheer insanity to insist that unless we could see a certain smell with our eyes, or smell a particular colour with our nose, or feel a particular sound with our hands, we shall not believe that it exists? Whoever makes such demands would be considered insane, and if perchance he is not sent to the lunatic asylum, he will certainly become a laughing stock for the street urchins. Strange to say, people raise such objections about God all the time and are still considered wise! Do they find nothing other than God to make the object of their mockery?

So far I have mentioned only the physical senses through which we acquire knowledge of various worldly phenomena. But there are countless other things which we cannot experience through any of our physical senses. Yet we have the same degree of certainty about them as about the others. Take the magnetic

force, for instance. Can we see it with our eyes, or hear it with our ears, or smell it with our noses, or taste it with our tongues, or touch it with our hands? No, but none of us ever denies its existence. Despite not being able to perceive magnetic force through our common senses, we certainly do not refute its reality, because we can categorically observe the effects and impact of this force, and it creates the same degree of certainty as gained by direct perception. When we see an ordinary piece of iron being pulled by a magnet, and we see this happen every time, this leads us to conclude that there must be a force in the magnet. We do not see the force of magnetism, but we believe that the magnet has some additional force, besides its obvious properties, which can only be observed by its characteristics and not directly through our senses. Likewise, there is electricity, which is not visible, but commands our conviction because of its effects. With the flip of a switch, we can promptly make a fan in the room spin, confirming that the fan is driven by an external power that was there before we pressed the button. Although we cannot see, hear, smell, taste, or perceive it through any of the common senses directly, we are convinced that electricity is a great power. This is because we witness its effects and never for a moment deny its existence. We believe in it just as we believe in the sun, the moon, the mountains and the rivers.

Consider the sentiment of love. Has anyone ever seen, heard, smelled or touched love? If there is any reader of this book who truly cherishes love and has felt it in his heart, I ask him whether he has not experienced in his small heart—which might weigh less than half a pound—the boundless sea of love, which, can be considered one of the most powerful and awesome of natural forces in a storm. It generates so much energy and power into the feeble human frame, that for the sake of the beloved he challenges the mountains, roams the deserts, takes on the beasts of the jungle, jumps into fires and faces the raging tempests of the sea, but never gives up. He keeps vigil during the nights, wanders about during the day like one possessed and his life ebbs from his eyes, but never wearies. Is there anyone who can deny the existence of this force, even though no one has ever seen, heard, smelled, tasted or touched it? Time, age, power, sense, lust, anger, mercy— to mention but a few—are examples of things which we believe in but they have never been directly perceived by our physical senses.

It is, therefore, childish to insist that unless we obtain knowledge of something by a particular means, we will not believe in its existence. The point is to gain knowledge from whichever direction it comes. Once the purpose is attained all else is resolved.

If someone says that he will only believe that he has seen inside a room if he is led into it by breaking the roof and not if he simply enters through the door, I would suspect that he wishes to blow off the roof rather than see the room. Once he has entered the room, it matters not whether he entered through the roof or through the door. After all you can only enter through the passage specified for it. To demand a passage of one's own choice is sheer insanity. And if we were to fulfil such a demand, others would start making similar demands. In other words, people want God to become a toy for their imagination, and keep changing His attributes like an impersonator (God forbid) so that everyone's fancy should be satisfied.

مَا قَدَرُوا اللهَ حَقَّ قَدْرِهِ

The people have not comprehended the attributes of Allah at all.

Surah al Hajj, 22:75

Do try to understand that the less subtle a thing, the easier it can be observed through physical senses, and the more subtle it is, the harder it is for the physical senses to experience it. It is for this reason that when we try to learn about subtle things we have to depend on their properties and their behaviour, rather than on direct observation. How then is it possible for God—who is not only Himself the most Subtle Being but is also the Creator of every subtle thing—to be seen by our physical eyes? The objection of the critics that they will not believe in God until they see Him with their eyes is, therefore, absurd. It would imply that the critic either believes God to be a corporeal being, or at least wants God to assume a corporeal form so that he can be absolutely sure by seeing Him with his own eyes. But the trouble is that there are millions of blind people in this world. Would they too not have the right to demand that God should assume some other material form so that they may taste, smell or feel Him? Does this not amount to ridiculing God? How shameful for a man who professes to have a mind and a heart!

If someone says that he would not believe in God unless he sees Him with his own eyes, all I should say is that if God could be seen with one's eyes, He would not be worth believing in at all. This is because in such a case many of His other attributes would be falsified. He is Incorporeal, for instance, but in this case He would become corporeal. He is Infinite but would become finite and so on and so forth. Moreover, if God were to adopt a corporeal and finite form for your sake, what is there to guarantee that you would not reject Him saying that you do not believe in a corporeal and finite God?

O God, how very Holy, Adorable and Perfect You are! Each attribute of Yours is guarded by another of Your attributes. When anyone attacks any one of Your attributes, Your other attributes—like vigilant and dutiful sentries—put such a person to shame. We have seen how a critic tried to create doubt concerning God's attribute of being Hidden, but His attributes of being Incorporeal and Infinite came forward at once and did away with the objection.

The Beauty of God lies in His being Hidden from our physical eyes and yet being apparent to us; He is Subtle but remains more evident and perceptible than material things. Unfortunate indeed is he who does not comprehend this subtle truth, for he stands on the brink of disaster.

In summary, the perfection of God Almighty demands that He be Subtle and Hidden from the physical eyes. This should not cause any uncertainty about His existence, for there are far more certain and conclusive ways available to recognise Him.

My dear brothers, pray do not deprive yourself of the precious bounty of faith on account of such baseless misconceptions. Will you follow the footsteps of those who believed in the magnetic and electric forces though they could not see them; and accepted the sovereignty of space and time and bowed down before lust and anger; but when it came to offering their Lord and Master the tribute of their love and servitude, they refused? Surely you will not do such a thing!!

Our God pages 6 to12

Proving the Existence of God

Written by | Mansoor Mirza |Waqif-e-Nau, Peace Village Canada

Growing up in an extremely devout Ahmadi family, we simply adopted our parents beliefs without question. It´s not that our parents didn´t encourage us to be curious, but being an Ahmadi Muslim just made sense. We accepted the teachings as they came. If we had questions, our elders had answers. I personally don´t recall having many questions though. Whatever was taught to me, I simply accepted - perhaps in a form of obedience. However, as I got into my early teenage years, and unbeknownst to myself, I gradually stopped walking that same footpath of spirituality that I once would´ve travelled blindfolded.

Praying was simply a mere set of motions. Attending Jama´at functions was no different. What would a young teenager who hasn´t understood their faith know? By the age of 16, I felt a void inside myself, a black hole. Eventually, my thoughts led me to question the existence of God. I expressed this to my parents shortly thereafter but instead of admonishing me they told me to pray to Allah the Almighty. Not at any time, though, but to pray specifically in Sajdah and ask for guidance. I did this daily for some days or weeks during the Vitr prayer. I repeatedly would ask God that "God, if You exist, please show me a sign ". In the beginning I received no answer or feeling but my persistence would not allow me to give up so easily, so I continued my routine.

I used to take a ride on the public transit home with my elder brother during my high school years and there was never a day where the bus was not packed to maximum capacity. On one of those days, I was able to find a seat with my brother. A few stops later, a well-dressed elderly gentleman got on the bus. As there were no vacant seats, he stood in a small crowd directly across where I sat. He began to speak to the other passengers, but they all ignored him as if he was not mentally fit.

Some time later, he looked directly at me while I had my headphones on and asked me my name. My heart told me that I should not ignore him like the others did as it would not sit well with my moral compass. I told him my name. He said that is a beautiful name. "Where are you from?" I responded. Then he asked me if I´m Muslim and I confirmed. He asked me about my studies and interests and then finally he hit me with a haymaker that would change my life forever. He said "God exists. You may not believe it, but He exists. And I´m here to tell you that He exists and that you are destined to do great things." I do not recall the remainder of the conversation but I was shook to my core! I did not know this man but in my heart of hearts, I knew that this could only be the means of the Almighty delivering His answer to my prayers.

There is no stronger feeling I could have felt than that of God hearing and answering His supplicant's prayer that day. To this day, I have not experienced greater satisfaction or peace-of-mind. Reflecting on this situation years later helped lead me back to a path of repentance. God had infinite ways to answer such a bold prayer from such a weak individual but due to His sheer grace and mercy, I am forever indebted to my Lord.

THE FIRST JALSA SALANA UK

Written by | Raheel Ahmad, Missionary UK

The Jalsa Salana of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community was initiated by the Promised Messiah(as) in 1891. What we know as the first ever Jalsa Salana of 1891 was in fact a gathering for a specific purpose.

The Promised Messiah(as) invited members of his Jamaat to come to Qadian for a consultation on a religious matter: to invite those opponents – who had either published edicts of disbelief against the Promised Messiah(as) or had supported it – to a method of identifying the truth.

The Promised Messiah(as) wrote Asmani Faisalah (The Heavenly Decree) in December 1891 and it intended to resolve the disputes between him and his adversaries. The Promised Messiah(as) had been inviting scholars to a discussion on the life and death of Jesus(as) as that was the key difference and the bone of contention of the entire dispute. Yet the only reply he received was from Maulvi Nazeer Husain and his acolyte, Muhammad Hussain Batalwi, who said that Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad(as) was not a Muslim and that they could only hold a discussion if he proved his Islam to them.

The Promised Messiah(as) had even gone to Delhi for this very purpose with his companions in October 1891. Despite all the arrangements at the Jami' Masjid of Delhi and an attendance of 5,000 people, Maulvi Nazeer Husain, to save face, declined to discuss the life and death of Jesus(as) and returned to the takfir of the Promised Messiah(as).

The Promised Messiah's book, Asmani Faisalah (The Heavenly Decree)was read out in the first Jalsa by Hazrat Maulvi Abdul Karim Sialkoti(ra) in front of 75 fortunate members who were part of this first historic Jalsa.

The book began with the verse, "Allah will not grant the disbelievers a way to prevail against the believers"(Surah al-Nisa, Ch.4: V.142) so as to state that the support and succour of Allah would determine which of the two parties was worthy of being called "the believers". After mentioning the details of the debate with Maulvi Nazeer Husain, the Promised Messiah(as) presented four ways, as described by the Holy Quran, by which the chosen ones of God could be identified and distinguished from the rest of mankind:

• The chosen ones of God receive many glad tidings from Him regarding themselves and their friends

• Secrets of the future are often revealed to them which relate to the decrees of Heaven concerning important events and persons of this world
• Their prayers are largely accepted
• The secrets and meaning of the Holy Word are opened to them in abundance
The Promised Messiah(as) invited his opponents to test the acceptance of prayers. He suggested the setting up of a body which should publicly invite the most physically ill (from any faith) to send in their names and full particulars, and then the parties, after dividing the afflicted people by casting lots, should pray for the betterment of their batch. The results should then be prepared, compared and published. It appears, however, that none had the courage or conviction to accept this open challenge.

Photo courtesy of the late Imam Bashir Ahmad Rafiq Sahib's archives

At the end of the book, the names of all 75 attendees of the Jalsa were published. The Promised Messiah(as) also published an announcement informing members of his Jamaat about the decision of an annual gathering, which would take place on ,27 28 and 29 December at Qadian every year. The Promised Messiah(as), speaking on the purpose of this gathering, wrote:
"All sincere souls who have entered the fold of this humble one should know that the purpose of pledging allegiance is to dampen the worldly ardour, so that the heart is engulfed in the love of the Bountiful God and of the Holy Prophet(sa), and to develop such a state of detachment that the Final Journey does not seem an unwelcome prospect. But in order to achieve this, it is necessary to stay in my company and to spend a portion of one's life in this cause, so that – if God Almighty so wills – through witnessing some definite signs, weakness, infirmity and tardiness may be overcome and perfect faith may be born, resulting in fervour and passionate ardour. One should always strive to achieve this goal and pray that God may grant this opportunity. Until this happens, it is essential to meet me now and then.
"Bai'at is devoid of all blessings and is a mere formality if one does not care to meet me. Since – due to physical inability, lack of resources, and long distances – it is not possible for everyone to stay in my company or to visit me a few times every year, and most hearts are not yet endowed with such ardent desire that they should bear the greatest troubles and hardships for the meeting, it seems appropriate, therefore, that three days of every year

should be fixed for a gathering in which all my devoted followers should – God willing – be present, with the condition of health, time and absence of strong impediments.
"So, in my opinion, these dates should be from 27 to 29 December. Hence, from this day, 30 December 1891, if we live to see 27 December, all our friends should, to the best of their ability, come and listen to divine words and join us in supplication for the sake of Allah."

(The Heavenly Decree, pp. 74-73)

He added:
"This gathering will be devoted to the exposition of such truths and spiritual insight as are necessary for the promotion of faith and certainty and spiritual understanding, and there will be special prayers and attention for the participants. And to the best of our ability, we shall endeavour to supplicate at the threshold of the Most Merciful that He may draw them towards Him, may accept them and may bring about a pious change in them.
"An additional benefit of these gatherings will be that each year, new entrants to the Jamaat shall, by being present on the fixed dates, get to know their brethren who had joined earlier. And these meetings will lead to progressive strengthening of the bond of mutual love and affection. Prayers for absolution will be offered for brothers who will have passed away in the interim, and supplications shall be made at the threshold of the Glorious God that He may unite all these brothers in spirit and banish all estrangement, dryness and differences from amongst them."

(The Heavenly Decree, p. 74)

The Promised Messiah(as) also published an announcement before the second Jalsa Salana of 1892 on 7 December 1892. Among the purposes detailed of this fathering were spiritual and moral progress and acquaintance with their spiritual family. An additional purpose of this Jalsa Salana was described as "to put forward sound policies for the religious benefit of Europe and America."

(Majmu'a-e-Ishtiharat, 7 December 1902, Vol. 1, pp. 342-340)

On the second day of the convention, on 28 December 1892, a consultation meeting was held for this purpose, and it was decided that an English magazine should be distributed – free of charge – in Europe and America.
It was the fruit of this consultation that Anjuman Isha'at-e-Islam (a body for the propagation of Islam) was set up under which the publication of the famous magazine, The Review of Religions was initiated by the Promised Messiah(as) in 1902, which played a pivotal role in the propagation of Islam to the West.

The Ahmadiyya UK Mission and its first Jalsa Salana

Photo courtesy of the late Imam Bashir

Ahmad Rafiq Sahib's archives

It is important to note that the Promised Messiah's(as) message had reached Europe and America as early as 1885 when he claimed to be the reformer of the age, and many connections and links were formed. A direct correspondence also took place with the native British people. Among them, some accepted and joined the Ahmadiyya Movement and others of intriguing nature came to Qadian to enquire about his claims. Hence it would not be incorrect to say that the Promised Messiahas was, in a manner of speaking, the first missionary to the Europeans and Americans before the departure of any Ahmadi missionary to those lands.

Hazrat Chaudhry Fateh Muhammad Sayal(ra) was the first missionary sent to the UK in 1913. The years after saw the influx of missionaries to the London mission. This mission – in the heart of the colonial empire – also served as a training ground for missionaries. It was the practice of missionaries to spend some time in the UK before heading to the country of their assignment. Thus, the UK mission was blessed with the company of many prominent companions of the Promised Messiah(as) and more importantly, with the visits of Khulafa-e-Ahmadiyyat until the migration of Hazrat Khalifatul Masih IV(rh) in 1984 and the eventual permanent residence of Khilafat.

The first Jalsa Salana United Kingdom took place for two days on 29 and 30 August 1964. There is, however, mention of an annual Jamaat conference of the United Kingdom in October 1949 where members of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community attended from around the UK. In it, the then imam of the Fazl Mosque, London, Mushtaq Ahmad Bajwa Sahib, also invited missionaries serving in many European countries to attend.

Ahmadi missionaries at the Annual conference of 1949

During this conference, a congratulatory message from the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat UK was sent to their Khalifa in Rabwah on the establishment of the markaz in the newly formed Pakistan and on the laying of the foundation stone of the Mubarak Mosque, Rabwah. Plans for the propagation of Islam in the West and a guideline for the spiritual and educational advancement of new converts were on the agenda during the conference.

While this conference was an historic event in the history of Ahmadiyyat in the UK, it is not certain whether this conference could be considered the first Jalsa Salana UK since it was merely reported as a conference in Al Fazl (Al Fazl, 1 November 1949). Also it is not reported to have been annually held thereafter. However, the Jalsa Salana of 29 and 30 August 1964 is reported in Al Fazl as the first Jalsa Salana of the United Kingdom. *(Al Fazl, 26 September 1964)*

The 1964 Jalsa was participated by

Photo courtesy of the late Imam Bashir Ahmad Rafiq Sahib's archives

Ahmadis around the UK and many British guests attended the final session of the Jalsa. The London Jamaat embraced the responsibility of providing accommodation and food to the guests and provided their homes for this cause.

Background and proceedings of the first Jalsa Salana UK

The two-day proceedings of the first Jalsa Salana UK began on 29 August 1964 in the vicinity of the Fazl Mosque, London. The former imam of the Fazl Mosque, London, Bashir Ahmad Rafiq Sahib wrote about the first Jalsa Salana, 1964:

"In April 1964, I was appointed Imam of the Fazl Mosque in London. Shortly after assuming charge, I felt that for the education and training of the Jamaat in England it was essential to hold annual conventions (Jalsas) so that at least once a year, all Ahmadis in England and some from the continent could get together. I called a meeting of the executive committee to chalk out a programme for the holding of the first annual Jalsa.

"In those days, we had acute financial problems. In any case, holding an annual convention was no simple task. With trust in God and in consultation with certain friends, it was decided that a beginning should be made in that very year. A committee was formed for this purpose. The dates fixed for the annual convention were announced through The Muslim Herald and the Akhbar-e-Ahmadiyya. The European Missions were also advised of the dates. It was decided to hold the Convention on 29 and 30 August 1964. This was the first historic convention of the British jamaats.

"Accommodation for members who were to visit London for the convention proved to be a complicated problem. A committee was formed and through Friday Sermons and Akhbar-e-Ahmadiyya, members of the London Jamaat were repeatedly invited to spare some space in their houses for the guests.

"At that time, the British Jamaat mostly consisted of young men. There were very few members who had their families with them. The young men mostly lived in one or two room bachelor lodgings. However, with His mercy and grace, members of the London Jamaat, displaying the spirit of selflessness and sacrifice, accommodated visitors in their houses. Mostly they set apart their sitting rooms to lodge the guests. His mercy and grace solved that problem in this manner. Members from Scotland, Bristol, Gillingham, Manchester, Oxford, Preston, Bradford and Birmingham came to participate in the Annual Convention.

"All meals were served in the mosque

premises. The house at 63 Melrose Road then served as the mission house. In its basement, there was a spacious kitchen in which all the meals were cooked. The team responsible for cooking remained in the basement both day and night. They served the two meals to all the guests. Tea was served round the clock. Arrangements were also made to serve special meals to those on a diet. May Allah abundantly reward all those who helped.

"In 1964, Hazrat Chaudhry Zafrulla Khan(ra) was a Judge at the International Court of Justice at The Hague. When I invited him to participate in the convention, he accepted my invitation with pleasure [...]

"Two or three weeks before the arrival of the guests, on a regular basis, members of the London Jamaat performed waqar-e-amal (dignity of labour). They thoroughly cleaned the mosque and the surrounding compound. They also cut the grass and attended to the garden. Some non-Muslims had been specially invited to the Convention. We also knocked at the doors of all our neighbours and invited them to the Convention. Many did participate and joined us at our meals."

(Taken from the personal memoirs of the late Imam Bashir Ahmad Rafiq Sahib)

Speaking on how the first Jalsa Salana in the UK was promoted, Bashir Ahmad Rafiq Sahib said in an interview:

"In the 1960s, I was the deputy imam here and I had a personal relationship with Hazrat Mian Bashir Ahmad Sahib(ra), who was the younger brother of Hazrat Musleh-e-Maud(ra). He wrote to me and said that the jamaat was scattered in Britain and there was no way of communicating with them, so [I should] try to bring out a small leaflet every month, giving the names of the jamaat so that everybody knew what was going on. So I started Akhbar-e-Ahmadiyya, which was published every month and through Akhbar-e-Ahmadiyya and The Muslim Herald, we informed Ahmadis in the UK and in Europe that Jalsa was going to be held, and also the local press gave us publicity. The Wandsworth Borough News published a report of the Jalsa, and they also published the announcement of the Jalsa Salana, but as mentioned, in those days, we did not have the resources to reach every newspaper." *(Unpublished interview, 2016, taken from Imam Bashir Ahmad Rafiq Sahib's archive)*

The Wandsworth Borough News reported on Friday, 4 September 1964:

"The first annual gatherings of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam was held on Saturday and Sunday at the London Mosque, Melrose-road, Wandsworth. More than 400 members of the community participated. The conference was opened by Mr. B. A. Rafiq, the Imam of the Mosque, and Prof. Abdussalaam, F.R.S., of the Imperial College of Science, presided. The speakers were Sir Muhammad Zafrullah Khan, and the Imam.

"Special arrangements were made for the Muslim ladies, in a separate marquee near the main meeting place."

A report on the proceedings of the first Jalsa Salana UK was published later in Al Fazl on 26 September 1964. The Muslim Herald also published a report in its September

Wandsworth Boro' News

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 4th 1964

The London Mosque, Wandsworth

The first annual gatherings of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam was held on Saturday and Sunday at the London Mosque, Melrose-road, Wandsworth. More than 400 members of the community participated.

The conference was opened by Mr. B. A. Rafiq, the Imam of the Mosque, and Prof. Abdussalaam, F.R.S., of the Imperial College of Science, presided. The speakers were Sir Muhammad Zafrullah Khan, and the Imam.

Special arrangements were made for the Muslim ladies in a separate marquee near the main meeting place.

The Wandsworth Borough News reported on Friday, 4 September 1964:

issue of 1964 titled, “The First Annual Gathering” – this report is given below:
“The First Annual Gathering
“The first Annual Gathering of the Ahmadis residing in the United Kingdom was organized at the London Mosque on Saturday, the 29th August 1964. In order to participate in this get-together members from Bradford, Birmingham, Bristol, Gillingham, Hayes, Southall, Oxford, Manchester, Preston, Glasgow and other centres came early in the day. Elaborate arrangements had been made beforehand in the Mosque premises for this purpose. Accommodation was provided for those who had come from other counties. The London Ahmadis generously offered free accommodation to their guests. The Mission also arranged for their food and tea.
“The program commenced with the recitation of the Holy Quran by Mr Masud Ahmad and the singing of religious songs by some vocally gifted individuals. Mahmood ul Hasan, Member of the Board of Revenue, East Pakistan, who is on a private visit to this country, took the chair for the morning session.
“In the opening speech the Imam Mr B.A. Rafiq, drew the attention of the audience to the vision of the Promised Messiah that he was delivering a speech in London and after it he had caught some white partridges. He pointed out that a part of the vision had already come true as in and around London, his missionaries gave a number of talks on Islam each year. The Imam emphasized that the time had come when the second part of the dream was to be fulfilled. He expected that English people would join the fold of Islam as the white partridges according to the interpretation of the vision, referred to the English.
“The Imam laid stress on the importance of the sacrifice of time and money in order to carry on the work of the spreading of Islam in this country with more vigor. He said that it is the keynote of any success that is to be achieved since without a concerted effort one cannot push the work of the Tableegh ahead. Mr A. R. Chowdry then read the various messages, which had been received, from our Missions in Africa, America, Europe and the Far East. Besides these a message from the Wakeel-ul- Tabshir, Rabwah, Pakistan, was also received and read. These messages congratulated the Imam on holding the first Annual Gathering in London and drew the attention of the Jamaat here to the importance of the task that lay ahead.
“Mr Naseer Ahmad Khan, (Lecturer, T.I. College, Rabwah), read his paper on the various aspects of the Khilafat and its important role in Ahmadiyyat.
“Next, the Chairman, Mr Mahmood ul Hasan spoke on the importance of the spiritual uplift and the moral discipline. In his speech he emphasized that according to the Holy Quran one of the main objects of the advent of the Promised Messiah was the spiritual uplift (i.e. Tajziyah-e-Nafs) of the humanity especially of the Muslims and Ahmadis. Tajziyah-e-Nafs is a spiritual exercise, which requires constant personal guidance from a spiritual leader. The leader exercises on the character of those who seek his companionship and contact a sublime influence analogous to the effect of a magnet on a piece of steel.
“Besides being attracted to it the piece of steel itself becomes magnetized as long as it is under the influence of the principal source of power. If the piece of steel goes beyond the magnetic field, it ceases to exercise magnetic properties; but if it remains in contact with a primary source of magnetism for a sufficiently long time it acquires magnetic properties permanently. So it is that the companionship of spiritually elevated personages has the effect of purifying the spirit of followers. Quoting Maulana Roomi, he said that the point has been aptly described in his famous mathnavi in the following verse:
“‘The spiritual benefit, which a person can derive by constant personal contact with a saintly person, is much greater than what one can acquire through a hundred years spent in formal prayers.’
“The speaker also emphasized the point that like all other exercises spiritual exercises required constant application of physical, intellectual, and moral forces. These faculties are much sharper during youth and decline, as we grow old, become

feeble or next to nothing at the stage of seventy. It was an erroneous idea for young men to think that one could put off devotion to spiritual exercises to the later stage of one's life. The most suitable age for the acquisition of moral and spiritual values was the period of youth.

"After the lunch and mid-day prayers, the second session commenced with Professor A. Salaam in the Chair. Sir Muhammad Zafrulla Khan, (Judge at the International Court of Justice, Hague), gave a speech in which he emphasized the importance of setting up a personal example and model of all that we claimed and said. Addressing the Ahmadis gathered on the occasion Sir Muhammad Zafrulla Khan suggested,

"'If we proudly claim to be morally, spiritually and culturally superior to all mankind then it becomes our great responsibility that our own actions should reflect the teachings of which we are the privileged inheritors.'

Hazrat Chaudhry Zafrulla Khan(ra) addressing the final session of the first Jalsa Salana United Kingdom, 1964

"Sir Muhammad Zafrulla Khan continuing his speech drew the attention of the members of the Community by saying that they were fortunate that they had come and settled in a country whose religion and culture was different to their own. It happily provided them with a great opportunity to show by their example that their culture and their beliefs and consequently their faith was in every respect superior to any other culture or faith. No other Tabligh could be more effective than their own example and actions.

"'For this' he said,

"'One should not fear that the Community is in a minority. Every prophet who revolutionizes the entire nation does so single-handed at first. He brings a doctrine quite contrary to the one followed by all the others. Through his own model and example, he brings a complete transformation in the land where he sows the seeds of his faith. So, work hard on this side in order to get the pleasure of God. Be fair in your dealings, as God loves those who are fair to all. And above all set up an example so that all the people might walk in your way.'

"On the second day, the program commenced under the chair of Mr A.A. Dean. Sir Muhammad Zafrulla Khan again addressed a large crowd of about four hundred people both the English and Pakistanis. The subject of his address was the life of Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of God be upon him)."

This Jalsa saw grand new heights and became an international Jalsa with the arrival of Hazrat Khalifatul Masih IV(rh). Ever since the beginning, Jalsa Salana UK has been a means of spiritual and moral advancement of Ahmadi Muslims and additionally a means of propagating the true message of Islam to the British public. The growth of these Jalsas has been remarkable under the guidance and leadership of Khilafat-e-Ahmadiyya.

With Jalsa Salana UK 2021 around the corner, let us pray that the following blessed words of the Promised Messiah(as) are fulfilled in our favour. The Promised Messiah(as), praying for the attendees of Jalsa, wrote:

"I conclude with the prayer that for everyone who travels for [attending] this Jalsa that is for the sake of Allah: May Allah, the Exalted, be with them, reward them in abundant measure, have mercy on them, ease up for them their circumstances of hardship and anxiety and eliminate their anguish and grief. May He grant them freedom from every single hardship and lay open for them the ways of [achieving] their cherished goals, and raise them up, on the Day of Judgment, among those of His servants who are the recipients of His blessings and mercy. May He be their Guardian in their absence until after their journey comes to an end.

"O Allah! O Sublime One and Bestower of bounties, the Ever Merciful and the One Who resolves all problems, do grant all these prayers, and grant us victory over our opponents with scintillating signs because You alone have all the prowess and power. Amin! Amin!!"

(Majmu'a-e-Ishtiharat, 7 December 1892, Vol. 1, p. 342)

Travelling the world during the Pandemic
Abid Khan Sahib's Diary

Alhamdulillah, ever since that first Virtual Mulaqat, we have been able to resume the weekly programme 'This Week with Huzoor' and have in the past few months had the honour to show Huzoor's meetings with various National Majlis-e-Amilas, Missionaries, the auxiliary organisations, Jamia and Waqf-e-Nau classes amongst others. There have been occasional moments during the virtual Mulaqats where there have been some slight technical issues, yet overall, these meetings have progressed smoothly and each week it has felt as though I am travelling with Huzoor to places new and old.

Indeed, a day before his meeting with Jamia Ahmadiyya Indonesia, Huzoor said to me that:

"Tomorrow there is a class with the Indonesian Jamia and so you can visit Indonesia with me tomorrow, whilst sitting here."

In response, I said that:

"Jazak'Allah Huzoor! And I pray that one day I am able to physically travel with you to Indonesia."

In each Mulaqat the participants have been blessed with the wisdom, guidance and prayers of Khalifa-Waqt. Jamaat Amilas have been motivated and received the answers to their issues.

Missionaries, including those who have qualified and those who are still studying in Jamia, have received the direct guidance of Hazrat Khalifatul Masih.

With patience and love, Huzoor gives time to all participants to speak to him and answers as many questions as is possible.

Many of the meetings have overrun and yet still the feedback received from the participants is that they wished the meetings could have continued even longer.

It is also noticeable how much interest and concern Huzoor has for those who attend. At the start of almost every meeting, Huzoor has confirmed if the participants are sitting in a Covid-secure environment and complying with the laws and official guidance in their countries. Similarly, Huzoor often asks if those present have been suitably fed.

Recently, a member of Atfalul Ahmadiyya who participated in a virtual Mulaqat, wrote to me that he and the other boys were asked to arrive two hours before the start of the Mulaqat and that the hall they were seated in was particularly cold. He wrote that as soon as the meeting started, he forgot about any discomfort and just enjoyed the blessing of meeting with Huzoor.

Later, I mentioned this to Huzoor. I was looking at the boy's comment through the lens of his love for Khilafat and how the meeting had left a strong impression upon him and increased

his faith. Yet, Huzoor noted the boy's comment through the lens of his love and concern for the children of the Jamaat.
Thus, in reply, Huzoor said:

"You should immediately contact the Sadr Khuddam in that country and ask him why the children were made to sit in the cold. They should have proper arrangements of heating and look after each of the children with love and kindness."

With the Grace of Allah, with each week that passes, more delegations and Jamaats are having the chance to meet Huzoor. It is with much anticipation that I look forward to seeing the schedule of which Jamaats are to have the honour of a Mulaqat with Huzoor in the weeks ahead.
Alhamdulillah, the virtual Mulaqats have been pleasing to Huzoor. This was confirmed to me, a few days after Huzoor met with the National Majlis-e-Amila of Mauritius.
During Mulaqat, Huzoor said:

"These (virtual) Mulaqats are having a beneficial effect as I am able to speak directly to Ahmadis in different countries. They are able to explain their issues directly to me and I am able to give my instructions directly to them. It is a means of bringing the Jamaat even closer together and shows how the progress of the Jamaat will continue in all circumstances, Insha'Allah – even in a state of a pandemic."

True humility

In September, I had submitted an article to Huzoor about my late father, Dr Hameed Ahmad Khan, for approval. The article had been written on Huzoor's instruction and I hoped very much that he would like it.
In the past, whenever I had submitted anything to Huzoor for approval, it had always been returned extremely quickly. However, this particular article remained with Huzoor for a few weeks.
I thought that probably Huzoor had been too busy to review it but a small part of me feared that Huzoor had read it but not liked it.
One afternoon in mid-October, whilst I was working at my desk, I received an email from the Private Secretary's Office.
Attached was a PDF of the article and on the front page was a long handwritten Urdu note. I recognised Huzoor's handwriting immediately and, given the significant length of the note, I feared very much that my article had displeased Huzoor.
It takes me a while to read Urdu and especially handwritten Urdu and so I asked one of my staff members to read the note to me. As he did, I was overcome with emotion. Rather than an admonition, Huzoor had gifted me with a truly beautiful letter filled with prayers for my father and for me. Huzoor's words were fatherly, tender and moving.
Though I would not like to share the rest of the letter, just the first line was more than enough to reduce me to tears.
Huzoor wrote:

"Dear Abid, I have now read your article and I apologise for the delay in reading it."

Which other leader would ever apologise to their servant?
I had no right to expect Huzoor to read the article, never mind that he should ever feel the need to apologise for the delay in reading it. May Allah enable all of us to learn from the humility and grace of our beloved leader.
Later that day, I reported for Mulaqat in Islamabad. As I took a seat in Huzoor's office all I could do initially was look down. I was humbled by Huzoor's message and remained overwhelmed by his love and kindness.
After a moment, Huzoor said:

"Did you receive my note?"

There was so much in my heart that I desired to say to Huzoor at that moment. How much his note had meant to me. How I loved him. How I desired to serve him. How I sought forgiveness for my weaknesses and shortcomings.
However, due to my heightened emotions, all I could bring myself to say was:

"Ji Huzoor, I have received it. Jazak'Allah."

Very graciously, Huzoor then mentioned some aspects of my article.
In particular, he referred to one part where I had mentioned that my father had almost remarried in 1999, a few years after my mother had passed away. At the last moment, Hazrat Khalifatul Masih IV (rh) had intervened and instructed my father not to go ahead with the marriage.

Referring to that time, Huzoor said:

"Your father was advised by certain people close to him to get married but the truth is that if it had gone ahead it would have had very dire consequences for him and for your family. You should thank Allah the Almighty that He saved you from such a trial."

Huzoor continued:

"Sometimes, even a person's close family members or loved ones give suggestions that are wrong and not in the interest of the person receiving the advice. Their advice is not always entirely sincere, rather it can be clouded by their own self-interest. That is why where in the Holy Quran it states that a person must bear witness with equity and truth it also applies to giving counsel or advice to others. The Holy Quran requires that a person must put aside all self-interest and personal feelings when giving advice to others. This is the Quranic standard that everyone should strive to uphold."

A few precious moments

A few minutes later, Huzoor asked me if I had seen a video circulating on WhatsApp showing wild animals living amongst one another in jungles and forests.

I had not seen the particular clip Huzoor was describing and so Huzoor told me to come around to his side of the desk.

Given my fear of causing any risk to Huzoor, I sought to ensure I maintained a suitable distance throughout. Nevertheless, it was the closest I had physically been to Huzoor for many months.

Thoughts came rushing into my head of heavenly moments in the past that perhaps I had taken for granted. My mind's eye raced through memories of being able to sit or stand near Huzoor on many occasions, in many countries and continents of the world.

On flights in America and Canada, I had crouched down besides Huzoor. On trains in Japan, I had sat next to him for a few moments. I had been blessed to sit with him in his car during a memorable journey through the Channel Tunnel. I had walked with Huzoor as he strolled by some of the most beautiful lakes in the world. However, due to Covid19-, it had been months since I had stood close to Huzoor.

As I was still lost in my thoughts momentarily, Huzoor took out his iPad and opened the YouTube app before using the search feature to find videos of lions, tigers, cheetahs, snakes and other animals vying for supremacy in the natural world.

Huzoor's enthusiasm and interest in nature was clear to see. We watched several videos and on each one, Huzoor commented with keenness and passion about the bravery, intelligence and fearlessness of the various wildlife.

Throughout, Huzoor's love for the Creation of Allah the Almighty was visibly apparent.

That afternoon, perhaps, for the first time in the pandemic, I felt as though I was able to spend some personal time with Huzoor.

It was something I greatly cherished and consider as amongst my most prized moments of the past year.

IKEA and a call

During late summer and early autumn, the Covid19- situation seemed to be much improved, with far less daily cases or deaths compared to the spring. Hence, in late October, whilst our elder two children were at school, my wife and I decided, after quite a lot of consideration and debate weighing up the possible risks, to go shopping at IKEA in Croydon.

We arrived at IKEA at 11am and, as we browsed the different aisles and sections, we lost track of time and it was 1pm by the time we finally reached the counter to pay for our goods. As I glanced at my watch, I was slightly concerned we would be late home, as I needed to prepare for Mulaqat.

As we waited in line, I checked Google Maps to see how the traffic was looking and then, just as it reached our turn to pay, suddenly and entirely unexpectedly my phone rang.

The number was 'Islamabad'.

As I answered the call, I heard the voice of Munir Javed sahib (Private Secretary) on the other end.

After saying salaam, Munir sahib simply said:

"Huzoor wishes to speak to you and so I am going to connect the call now."

I did not have a second to get ready. I gestured to my wife Mala to pay the bill and I ran out with my phone to the car park in search of better reception and a spot where there was less background noise.

In my haste, I took the trolley with me, filled with several items that had just been scanned but not yet paid for!

Mala later told me she understood from my demeanour that I had received a call from Huzoor but she was worried that the doors would start beeping as I exited the store or that the security guards would stop me. Thankfully, through Allah's Grace, this did not happen and she joined me outside a few minutes later after having paid the bill.

As the call was connected, Huzoor informed me that he had reviewed the episode of 'This Week with Huzoor' due to be broadcast on MTA the following day. It included clips from a virtual Mulaqat of Germany Jamaat's National Amila a few days earlier.

Having reviewed it, Huzoor enquired why I had not included a part of the meeting in which Huzoor spoke to Germany's National Umoor-e-Kharija (External Affairs) Secretary about the asylum cases of Ahmadi Muslims to Germany. I had purposely not included that part of the meeting, as it had seemed more private and internal.

Furthermore, Huzoor had quite firmly expressed his dissatisfaction at the efforts of the German Jamaat and the National Umoor-e-Kharija Secretary in assisting Ahmadis who had claimed asylum in Germany.

Thus, I said:

"Huzoor, I did not include it because I thought it was an internal matter and also because I thought its broadcast might be embarrassing for the Umoor-e-Kharija Secretary and Amir Sahib Germany."

In response, Huzoor said:

"There are certain Ahmadis in Germany who write to me and they think that I do not know their plight and there may even be some, God forbid, who think that their cases and difficulties are not significant to me and that I have not taken any action to help and support them. This is completely wrong and so to remove this false notion and misconception against Khilafat itself it is important that it should be played."

Huzoor continued:

"The life of every single Ahmadi Muslim is important and of great value to me and I have repeatedly instructed the National Jamaat administrations to help and support Ahmadi Muslims who take asylum and to guide them. The Ahmadis in Germany should be aware of this."

Accordingly, we did broadcast the relevant part on 'This Week with Huzoor' and much of the feedback I received proved that what Huzoor had said was completely correct.

Several Ahmadis wrote or commented of how they felt extremely reassured and great relief that Huzoor had instructed the German Jamaat to take seriously their plight and knowing they had his support and prayers was extremely comforting and gave them strength for the future.

The conversation continued for around ten minutes and I thought that I had somehow managed to conceal the background noise and commotion of where I was speaking from.

However, after giving the instructions regarding the MTA broadcast, Huzoor said:

"What is all that noise? Are you playing with your children whilst talking on the phone?"

In reply, I said:

"No Huzoor, I am actually out shopping and am speaking to you from the car park!"

After a few more minutes, during which Huzoor even asked what we had purchased, the call ended. The half-hour journey home was enjoyable as my wife Mala and I spoke of how I had run out of the shop frantically and proceeded to have a daftari Mulaqat whilst in the IKEA car park.

An unusual gift

The following Friday I travelled to Islamabad for Mulaqat with a rather unusual accompaniment. I had bought some good quality white coat hangers, which I wished to gift to Huzoor.

I was well aware that it was a rather strange and unusual gift. In fact, I made sure I concealed them well so that people in the Private Secretary's Office or elsewhere in Islamabad would not notice them.

The reason I had brought the coat-hangers was that over the preceding few weeks, I had noticed that hanging placed upon the coat-stand in

Huzoor's office were basic plastic hangers, upon which I assumed Huzoor hanged his achkan coat. It occurred to me that such basic hangers might cause for Huzoor's achkan to lose its shape.

When I entered Huzoor's office, I was surprised to see that the coat-hangers I had seen in previous weeks had now been replaced and instead there was a white coat-hanger that appeared identical to the ones I had brought with me.

Upon seeing this, I tried to conceal the hangers I had brought, which I now considered to be redundant.

In any circumstance, coat hangers were a strange gift to give to Khalifatul Masih but especially now that the basic hangers had been replaced.

Despite my efforts to obscure the bag, as soon as I sat down opposite Huzoor's desk, Huzoor noticed the bag to my side.

Huzoor said:

"What have you brought with you?"

Upon this, I explained what I had brought and why I had brought them.

I felt embarrassed but in his unique and special way, Huzoor did not make me feel that my gesture was insignificant or inappropriate. Rather he very graciously expressed his appreciation.

Huzoor said:

"Jazak'Allah for the gift but I have more than enough hangers at home which I could bring to my office but I tend not to hang my coat here. So you should keep these hangers for yourself and consider them a gift from me."

Thereafter, Huzoor asked me how much I had spent on the hangers.

In reply, I said:

"Huzoor, they cost 4.50£ for a set of 8."

Upon this, with his beautiful sense of humour to the fore, Huzoor jokingly said:

"As I said, I have more than enough hangers at home and so I can do a better deal and sell you 8 of my hangers for 3.50£!"

Upon this, both Huzoor and I laughed and despite my gift being extremely small and insignificant, Huzoor had shown a great deal of affection and appreciation. It was a reflection of his humility and grace.

Courage of our convictions

I would have been more than happy for the Mulaqat to continue in the same vein but after a few minutes, Huzoor returned his attention to the file of letters placed before him and instructed me to present whatever official issues I wished to seek guidance upon.

Upon this, I mentioned how the media was reporting that Pope Francis had given comments in favour of civil partnerships for gay people.

Though Huzoor had appreciated several statements given by Pope Francis in the past, this was a comment that Huzoor expressed his disagreement with.

Huzoor said:

"Like all people, gay people should have their civil and civic rights protected, however the major religions of the world are clear that such unions are against their teachings. The fact the Pope has made this comment is a manifestation of how society continues to move away from religion and how most of the religions are being guided by the people, rather than religion serving its purpose to guide humanity. Thus, if the media ask us for our comment, you should respond by saying that 'We follow the Holy Quran and so we cannot endorse civil partnerships'."

Huzoor continued:

"In dealing with the media, you and all of our Ahmadis who are engaging with the media must be courageous and, at the same time, act with wisdom. There will be people or organisations who will turn against us, who will oppose us because of our firm convictions in the truth of Islam. We must respond with wisdom but we should never fear others, we must only fear Allah. This is what makes the Jamaat of the Promised Messiah (as) unique – that we continue to act upon the teachings of our religion. We stand up for our values and defend our religious principles. Always remember that truth is on our side."

To continue reading this diary or to read other diaries please visit:
www.pressahmadiyya.com/personal-accounts

HOW ISLAM TRANSFORMED ENGLAND

Written by | by Nauman Hadi, Missionary UK

Plight of England before the 16th Century

Have you ever wondered how London got those fascinating colossal buildings, architectural masterpieces which remind you of the days of Rome? It's strange when we come to think how a city which was congested with poorly built houses laden with disease and poor sanitation, but the centre of which were just a few Gothic buildings not only became a thing of architectural awe but boasted the administrative machinery of an empire behind those walls. England was the hub of religious intolerance during the medieval era, plagued with superstitious belief which heavily influenced its laws. As for intellectual advancement it too followed the footsteps of the Church in declaring the Scripture as the only path that one needed to explore. By the 16th century England was not special in any way. It was a small island compared to others isolated on its own compared to the Catholic empires of France and Italy.

So how does an empire arise from nothing? The answer is Islam. Islam was responsible for the amazing transformation that turned a country slowly being devoured by its enemies; both internal and external, to an economic, cultural and social hub of the known world. And it all took place during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I.

As this article aims to compare two periods of time in order to determine the grandeur of the pivotal force- Islam, it is befitting that we examine what England was actually like before the reign of Queen Elizabeth I in detail. It is quite difficult to sum up the progress of a nation which took hundreds of years and saw countless pivotal moments in just a few paragraphs.

However, I shall confine myself to paint only one image from which the reader can ascertain what England was before the 16th century, or in other words before the reign of Queen Elizabeth.

As the reader is aware the history of England as a nation begins when the Romans abandoned it leaving it to be ruled by tribal warlords. Though small kingdoms were established but a complete nation had not yet come into existence. The economy of the country was in tatters and there was no single identity that could be classed as being strictly 'English'. It took centuries of Germanic migration to see the beginnings of various cultures which transformed into kingdoms that began to compete for power. England remained in this condition till 1066 when the Battle of Hastings took place and replaced the Anglo-Saxon elite with French and Norman nobility. William the Conqueror took over and replaced the existing tribal system by a system of controlling the population through castles scattered throughout the land. The next few centuries saw no accelerated development of the intellect of the nation, as continuous rebellions broke out and the country was plagued with religious conflict. Furthermore, tensions between the elite saw civil wars break out resulting in the loss of Normandy. In short, England along with her allies and enemies in Europe was not in good health.

The Tudor Period

Later on during the emergence of the Tudor House due to an increase in population and the Church's support of King Henry VII, economic advancements were made. However, the country was about to undergo a massive problem which would create such disorder that history would remember the perpetrators with the euphamism 'bloody'. In the years following King Henry VII's demise, his son's rule would tragically alter the course of history. Henry VIII was to create such disorder in society that perhaps seldom occurs in history. The separation of the Church of England from the Catholic Church resulted in killing of thousands of innocent people as Catholic churches and monasteries were looted and confiscated by the crown. It is estimated that around 72,000 people were killed during the reign of King Henry VIII . This created great upheaval in the country as the Crown's focus on personal issues left other areas of the nation's wellbeing to fall into decline. During a time when the monarch had absolute power it was up to him or her to ensure that the country was making progress, economically, socially and intellectually. However, as the King was busy attending to his fantasies about marrying newer and newer Queens in order to obtain a worthy heir to the English throne, the country suffered. Not only was there an air of dismay amongst the English people about the tragic separation from the Church but tensions were now rising between Catholics and Protestants.

King Henry VIII died in 1547 after ruling for 37 years and his son Edward IV was crowned King. However, he was an ill child coming into power at the age of 9 and passing away 6 years later. However, it is the daughter of King Henry VIII: Mary whose rule we must examine to understand the condition of the country. History remembers Queen Mary as 'Bloody Mary' for the sheer amount of Protestants that she burnt at the stake. She restored protestantism after years of break-up with the Church and seems as though spent her entire life trying to accomplish this task. In the first month of her rule she issued a declaration stating that she would not force any of her subjects to convert to her religion, but a

few weeks later leading protestants in the country were in prison . It was not long before the string of burnings at the stake began to cause an outcry across Europe. Queen Mary's hands were occupied dealing with religious opposition which lead to hardly any progress. Despite Queen Mary's marriage to Phillip of Spain England did not benefit from trade between the two countries even though Spain had accessed wealth from newly discovered America and could have opened an entire spectrum of progress for England.

Queen Elizabeth I of England

We now turn our attention towards the Queen who changed everything, who initiated the 'Golden Age' for the country and forever ensured England would be seen as a real power within Europe. Queen Elizabeth was Protestant, though we still find reports of Catholics being executed during her rule, but her rule was more tolerative towards other creeds. Historians often regard her reign to be one of a renaissance which that inspired national pride through classical ideals, international expansion, and naval triumph over the Spanish. In terms of the entire century, the historian John Guy (1988) argues that England was economically healthier, more expansive, and more optimistic under Queen Elizabeth's rule than it had been for a thousand years.

This 'golden age' represented the apogee of the English Renaissance and saw the flowering of poetry, music and literature. The era is most famous for theatre, as William Shakespeare and many others composed plays that broke free of England's past style of theatre. It was an age of exploration and expansion abroad, while back at home, the Protestant Reformation became more acceptable to the people, most certainly after the Spanish Armada was repulsed. It was also the end of the period when England was a separate realm before its royal union with Scotland.

England was also well-off compared to the other nations of Europe. The Italian Renaissance had come to an end under the weight of Spanish domination of the peninsula. France was embroiled in its own religious battles due to significant Spanish intervention, that would only be settled in 1598 with the Edict of Nantes. In part because of this, but also because the English had been expelled from their last outposts on the continent by Spain's Tercios, the centuries-long conflict between France and England was largely suspended for most of Elizabeth's reign. Economically, the country began to benefit greatly from the new era of trans-Atlantic trade, persistent theft of Spanish treasure, and the African slave trade.

In short, this was a time when England really began to take shape into the current day majesty that we see it as in the streets of London. But the question is, how? For centuries England had been in a deplorable state, wars, refomations, execution, civil unrest, social upheaval. Why did England transform during the time of Queen Elizabeth I?

On a May morning in 1570 a papal bull, nailed to the door of the Bishop of London's palace, sealed Protestant England's break with Catholic Europe. Europe was Catholic, Spain was England's bitter enemy and now the Vatican too had joined the list. Elizabeth was left alone, so she turned to Islam. There is no question that Jerry Brotton's exploration of 'a much longer connection between England and the Islamic world' is generally appreciated has currency.

In the following pages I will prove how it was inspiration from Islam that lead to the Golden Age of Britain, how Queen Elizabeth

I sent letters to the Islamic world asking for trade and the manner in which she transformed her country being impressed by what she found in the Muslim lands.
From the moment of her accession to the throne in 1558, Elizabeth began seeking diplomatic, commercial and military ties with Muslim rulers in Iran, Turkey and Morocco — and with good reasons. Soon, the might of Catholic Spain was against her with an invasion imminent. English merchants were prohibited from trading with the rich markets of the Spanish Netherlands. Economic and political isolation threatened to destroy the newly Protestant country and Elizabeth was in need of dire help. Elizabeth responded by reaching out to the Islamic world. Spain's only rival was the Ottoman Empire, ruled by Sultan Murad III, which stretched from North Africa through Eastern Europe to the Indian Ocean. The Ottomans had been fighting the Habsburgs for decades, conquering parts of Hungary. Elizabeth I hoped that an alliance with the Sultan would provide much needed relief from Spanish military aggression, and enable her merchants to tap into the lucrative markets of the East. For good measure she also reached out to the Ottomans' rivals, the Shah of Persia and the ruler of Morocco.
"Neither the earth, the seas, nor the heavens, have so much force to separate us, as the godly disposition of natural humanity, and mutual benevolence have to join us together"
She wrote to the Shah of Persia in 1561. She clearly wanted to build as many bridges as she could but not with her Christian counter – parts but with the Muslims. She managed to establish firm trading routes with the Muslim rulers, with ambassadors and emissaries travelling to and from England.
This new trade alliance brought in a steady flow of cash which Elizabeth used to fund expeditions to the distant lands in order to establish trade. The famous East India Trading company was from among a list of such expeditions which would later go on to conquer the entire subcontinent helping the supremacy of the British Empire. The Barbary Company and The Turkey Company, too were given Royal Patent to open trade with Morocco and Turkey. Queen Elizabeth I was being strangled by dwindling trade alliances which was crucial to the country's economy. It was the trade alliances made with the Muslim states such as the Turks which not only granted the country a breath of relief but accelerated trade to such a pace that England was now able to fund huge expeditions abroad. Hence, it was not only trade with the Muslims, but also friendship with them which enabled Queen Elizabeth I to save her country.
The economy back at home began to improve as well. London became architecturally transformed as new offices pertaining to international affairs began to be established. In fact we even find accounts of the Queen trying to push the 'removal of the vice of usury' in order to build a stable economy. This too was inspired by the common ground that Elizabeth tried to find with the Muslim rulers she was trading with.
The feeling of financial well-being was made clear in 1576 in a speech to Parliament by Sir Walter Mildmay who was the chancellor of the Exchequer at the time:
"(Elizabeth) had inherited a realm miserably overwhelmed with Popery, dangerously afflicted with war, and grievously afflicted with debts; the burden of which cannot be remembered without grief. Her Majesty

hath most carefully delivered the kingdom from a great and weighty debt, wherewith it hath long been burdened. The realm is not only acquitted from this great burden but also her Majesty's credit thereby both at home and abroad greater than any other prince for money"

Intellectual Advancement

The Elizabethan era saw the rise of the English Renaissance as the British came into contact with an entire spectrum of arts from the Islamic World. We should remember that by the 16th century Islam had already seen an array of scientists, mathematicians and intellectuals which outweigh those in the West. Elizabethan England, when it came into contact with such a rich intellectual culture, began to absorb and access the knowledge that the Muslims had been enjoying for centuries. Furthermore, the oversea expeditions not just during Queen Elizabeth I's rule but for centuries after, that were triggered due to trade with Muslims were the primary source of gaining new knowledge. The skill of circumnavigation enabled many sciences to further develop as it allowed empirical examination. Charles Darwin, though he appeared later, cannot have conducted his research into evolution without travelling to distant parts of the world. Hence, the intellectual advancements made during the time of Queen Elizabeth I were made possible due to the English access to Muslim knowledge alongside Muslim trade generating economic possibilities leading to exploration.

What is interesting to note is the communication which took place between the rulers of the Muslim lands and Elizabeth gives us a detailed description of how Islam was viewed by her. In one of her letters she wrote: she was 'the most invincible and most mighty defender of the Christian faith against all kind of idolatries' . This lead to thousands of English traders entering into Muslim lands, enjoying such safety which they would never receive in Europe, especially since the Inquisition was ablaze. Queen Elizabeth I also believed that Islam was more common to Protestant belief than it was to Catholicism.

The sugar, silks, carpets and spices transformed what the English ate, how they decorated their homes and how they dressed. Words such as 'candy' and 'turquoise' (from 'Turkish stone') became commonplace. Even Shakespeare got in on the act, writing "Othello" shortly after the first Moroccan ambassador's six-month visit. The Country was being transformed into something that had never been seen before. Prosperity was rising, people were turning towards poetry and intellect was growing. Take a moment to admire the paintings from that era (1600-1540) and you will find that the monarchs and noblemen are wearing silk from Turkey, or have pearls in the background.

In short, it was simply due to the contact with Islam that opened doors for Queen Elizabeth enabling her to accelerate the economic, political, intellectual and architectural progress of her country. In essence she learnt many arts from the Muslims which she introduced to her countrymen leading to cities like London taking place at the forefront of advancement in a new kind of renaissance. Whether people believe this or not, but Islamic culture did indeed bring about the change that was so much needed to bring England on the right track; a track which would create an empire upon which, the sun never set.

Muslim Prayer

N S Y B W G N T V E L J R M N A J Z P P
K L A R I R U K U U Y Q J H P F L V U Q
J M X L I Q G Z Y B T I C D C Z A K Q S
V W I E A A A E U F A S N S A R H R Q Z
F C H M I T E M M F H H E Z U R T J Z U
N A O S A D K I A Z A A Q U T N O F J Q
I S A N A G U M W T J D Q H E T N O F F
Y R K D G J H J J P U Q L R X A A A D A
A C U K A R D R I T D V Y W M S S V H J
T W S F W I E A I L F N Z S G B S I N A
U C O J T M H G N B S Z C Q M E T K V R
N A O X R A J A A J Z A V I O E C P V O
T S F B A M A Z F T Y J G E S H X T D G
L L X I V O N A T B I W K M Q S X B Q U
Q S W W E T A A K I P O A H U G N Y P A
E P I G E G Z N L O I L N M E M Q A J P
S E T C H K A E G A I J T Z U U N P F Q
G R R B V F V T I L A W A T Q K U J A L
K B F L K R C A L Z E V T A K B E E R G
K M M L O C I G N Y P B P L B U Q T Y B

Congregation Maghrib Tahajud Tilawat
Takbeer Tasbeeh Mosque Traveeh
Darood Sunnah Iqamat Salat
Fajar Kusoof Janaza Jilsa
Sajda Azaan Witr Farz
Ruku Nafl Zuhr Isha
Eid Niyat Imam Asr

HALLOWEEN IS A FORM OF SHIRK

The following is an extract taken from the Friday Sermon of 29 October 2019 delivered by Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih V, may Allah strengthen his hand:

The evil deed which I wish to mention and is celebrated nowadays, and will be in the next few days, is the custom of Halloween. As I have mentioned, even Ahmadis, without thinking or understanding, permit their children to take part in this.

If you ponder over the matter, however, you will find that it is an innovation that crept into Christianity and leads to Shirk [associating partners with God]. Witches, jinn and satanic acts have all been forbidden in the Bible, but they found their way into Christianity because people have ceased to practice this religion.

[This tradition] is usually considered just a bit of fun or fulfilling children's desires. We should always remember that every form of fun which is based on Shirk or may cause harm should be avoided by Ahmadis at all cost …

Occasionally, children ask me in person or through letters as to what harm there is in Halloween and why parents don't let them take part in it, when other Ahmadi parents allow their children to do so.

[Whenever I was faced with this question] I would answer according to my understanding, that this is a wrong and disliked practice, thus I would stop them. But now that its history has come to light, it is necessary for Ahmadi children to steer clear of this.

This innovation crept into Christianity, or the West, from a belief of the Irish. Pagans from the older ages practiced this during the times of anti-religiousness, where it became prevalent. Its foundations were laid on witchcraft and satanic views. This completely obliterates the sanctity of religion and family values.

No matter how much people may say it is fun, its foundations were wrong. This is not all. There is Shirk in this also as its fundamental belief was that on 31 October, the barriers between the living and the dead are broken and that dead haunt the living on this day. The dead create problems for

the living, cause them illnesses and other such nonsense is said about this day. Then, to save oneself from this, their so-called sorcerers are called, and they ask for the animals and crops and make a sacrifice through them. Bonfires are also a part of their tenets so that it may discourage the dead from carrying out such acts. By scaring the dead, or by pleasing them through making these sacrifices, they are deterred. To scare them away, costumes and specific clothes are worn, for example masks.

Nevertheless, as I have said that when Christianity spread, they too adopted this tradition and it was included as a festival. Catholics especially practice this tradition as compared with others. Through Christianity, the media and word of mouth, this tradition has spread around the world and especially in the West – USA, Canada, UK, Japan, New Zealand, Australia etc. As I said earlier, this is a hidden sin, which those Muslims residing in the West are practicing also.

Children wear various outfits and go from door to door, asking things of the locals so that the dead souls may be comforted. If the residents give something to those children, then it is considered that the dead souls cannot cause any harm to the residents of that house. This is Shirk. You may say that it is fun and it is a source of enjoyment, but the background is all based on Shirk. Additionally, it is improper for an Ahmadi child that they go out in strange costumes and looks and then to go from house to house like beggars asking for things. Even if children reply that they were merely going to ask for things like chocolate, asking like this is also incorrect. An Ahmadi should have a certain level of self-respect and this should be instilled from childhood. These things also lead one away from religion.

Thus, when this is celebrated, it is said that temporary belief in witches, evil spirits, Satan worship and supernatural beings is a harmless bit of fun. This is an entirely incorrect outlook. These are all satanic thoughts and our children should not only avoid this, they should strictly steer clear of it.

Only till recently did villagers give things to children when they asked of them so as to avoid the harmful effects of evil spirits. In any case, as children, or at times older people asking on behalf of the children, enquire about this, I say here that this is a harmful tradition; such a tradition that draws one closer to Shirk.

It is a result of this that children are encouraged to then commit wrong acts as it was done in the name of fun or entertainment. Children are rude to their parents and neighbours; not only parents and neighbours, but they increase the tendency of being inconsiderate to their environment and their elders as a result of this. This was ascertained through a survey. Other crimes are also on the increase as a result of this. Due to these actions, they are encouraged.

In the West, every wrong that children commit is defended in the name of fun and bearing in mind their rights, and they are permitted and continue to be permitted to carry out such wrongs. However, now people are beginning to raise their voice against this as it is detrimental to their conduct and behaviour.

Those who voice their concerns against Halloween also say that this leads to children having the excuse of scaring and threatening others in the name of fun, and this is increasing, something I mentioned earlier. Crime rates are on the rise because of this. On the one hand, you have films which are giving the wrong message, and then on the other, if children do start carrying out such acts and elders encourage the younger generation, then society will face a downfall. What else can happen?

And the most noteworthy thing of all is that by believing in spirits in this manner, the souls are being brought to the level of God, and then to save oneself from their evil ploys, Satanic ways are adopted. In other words, evil spirits are brought at the same level as Allah the Almighty, and by giving children gifts, those same spirits are being pleased; or by means of sorcerers who use their spells to scare away spirits. In any case, this is an entirely wrong and vain concept.

(Extract from Friday Sermon delivered
by Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih V[aa]
on 29 October 2010)